

Small Business Advocacy Council Meeting

Friday, May 5 2006

8:30 AM

Economic Development Corporation

Meeting Minutes

I. Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

II. In Attendance were:

Lieutenant Governor Charles J. Fogarty, Chair

Saul Kaplan, RI EDC

Louis Soares, RI EDC

Curtis Spence, Claymar Enterprise

Mark Deion, Deion Associates

Philip Papoojian, Mereco

Ed Greene, Sage Business Consultants

Gip Cabral, Cabco Engineering

Shawn Donahue, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island

Brad Johnson, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island

Sherri Carrera, RI EDC

Kelly E. Carello, Secretary of State's Office

Joe Cannon, CAS America

Denise Barge, RI MIDC

Monah H. Rhodes, RI MIDC

Jim Hurton, Narragansett Chamber of Commerce

Jerry Meyer, East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Douglas Jobling, RI SBDC

Adriana Dawson, RI SBDC

Mark Hayward, US SBA

Jason Martiesian, United Healthcare

Donald Croisetiere, United Healthcare

Ana Morgan, Morgan & Associates

III. Approval of March 3, 2006 Meeting Minutes

The Chairman called for the approval of the previous meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

IV. Comments from the Chair

Chairman Fogarty greeted members and congratulated Saul Kaplan on his appointment as Director of the RI Economic Development Corporation. The Chairman also discussed concerns his office have fielded from small businesses regarding the steep increase in gas prices. The Chairman has requested that EDC determine what the potential impact of these escalating prices may have on small

businesses - particularly on Rhode Island's tourism and transportation industries. The Chairman introduced Vladimir Ibarra as the new SBAC staff representative.

V. RI EDC Update

Saul Kaplan Acting Executive Director, RI Economic Development Corporation.

Director Kaplan stated that this would be the first time that two directors would follow the same strategy and approach to strengthening the RI economy. He highlighted the work of the "Every Company Counts" initiative as a key cornerstone to EDC efforts to connect and fill the needs of companies. He noted the need to work together through collaboration. He went on to discuss his conversation with Chairman Fogarty on the rising energy cost and its impact on small businesses and how there are efforts on the way to collect data to understand this impact. Lastly, he applauded the Council and said that he was there to listen to their needs and incorporate those to EDC programs.

VI. Health Insurance Options for Small Business: Q & A

**Shawn R. Donahue & Brad Johnson, Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI
Jason C. Martiesian & Donald Croisetiere, United Healthcare**

The presentation focused on the current climate of small business

absorbing more of the cost for health insurance. Higher premium costs are requiring business owners to make more educated choices on their plans. There was discussion on legislation before Congress that would allow small businesses to purchase health insurance through trade associations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce or other nonprofit groups. Additional discussions on current trends, health reimbursement accounts, wellness programs, and health risk assessments were also brought up.

VII The Emerging Women in Business Conference

Denise Barge, Executive Director, Rhode Island Coalition for Minority Investment

Denise Barge, Executive Director of the RI Coalition for Minority Investment invited members to attend the Emerging Women in Business Conference on June 8, 2006 from 5:00 to 9:15 pm at the CCRI Providence Campus. The Keynote speaker is Nadine Thompson, President, CEO & Co-Founder of WARM SPIRITS, Inc. Additional information is available at www.emergingwomen.biz

Adjournment

Chairman Fogarty requested a motion for adjournment, which was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.